



Hundredth Legislature - Second Session - 2008
Introducer's Statement of Intent
LB 903

Chairperson: Ron Raikes
Committee: Education
Date of Hearing: February 4, 2008

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

LB 903, the Nebraska Elementary Attendance Region (NEAR) Act, empowers certain school districts to create elementary attendance regions. Elementary attendance regions are community-governed elementary sites established by residents of a single Class II, III or IV K-12 district with the primary purpose of assuring community educational governance in sparsely populated areas of the state. Certain criteria would have to be met to authorize the creation of such a region and the basic procedures for creating and financing a NEAR are outlined briefly below.

LB 903 establishes two tiers of NEARs, which must meet the following criteria:

Outside the limits of a city, village or unincorporated village: minimum of 5 resident students, at least 7 miles from nearest attendance site and the total region must contain at least 100 square miles of contiguous territory.

Within a city, village or unincorporated village: minimum of 25 resident students, at least 7 miles from the nearest attendance site and the total region must contain at least 36 square miles of contiguous territory.

LB 903 establishes criteria for creating a NEAR either through school board approval after submission of a proposal or through a petition process by a group of residents within the proposed region. A NEAR operating council, consisting of 3-5 residents of the region, will make recommendations to the K-12 board regarding operations of the school. All annual operational and maintenance costs are the responsibility of the K-12 district.

The school district may provide a facility or impose a levy on the residents of the K-12 school district of one cent per \$100 valuation not to exceed \$50,000 for five years for construction, purchase, renovation or lease of a facility. If the facility for a NEAR is not provided by the K-12 board, the NEAR Operating Council may levy a tax on the property within the elementary region, not to exceed five and one fifths cents per \$100 of valuation not to exceed \$50,000 in total over five years.

Principal Introducer:

Senator Steve Lathrop